

February 24, 2022

From:

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Honorable Environment Committee:

I am in favor of the ACT CONCERNING THE HAND-HARVESTING OF HORSESHOE CRABS IN THE STATE (HB 5140 HORSESHOE CRABS) with concerns/reservations

I agree there should be no hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs or their eggs in CT.

I understand that their blood is important for biomedical purposes.

In the future, please consider monitoring the treatment of horseshoe crabs by the biomedical industry. It would be beneficial to the horseshoe crab population if there was a way to monitor the mortality of the crabs due to over-bleeding, and to limit the numbers of crabs taken, and to require better treatment of the crabs during this ordeal. For example, they should not be kept out of water at any point but kept in sea water (such as they were taken from), and they should be returned gently to the sea. Detailed records should be required of how many are taken from where, and monitoring of capture and return should be considered.

Biomedical take of these crabs due to over-bleeding, poor treatment and lack of recruitment of young due to lack of reproduction, is source of greater mortality than appears on the surface.

If 30% of a crab's blood is taken, what does that mean?

See this from an article in Popular Mechanics, June 4, 2020:

The murky world of horseshoe crab bleeding sounds like something PETA's deftest marketers made up. Horseshoe crabs are taken from the ocean and drained of a third of their valuable blue blood—a third of a human's blood is half a gallon—then the crabs are thrown back. They spend days out of the water, in varying temperatures and conditions, and little has been measured about what happens after that.

More recent studies have shown evidence that a previous belief that "just" 15 percent of crabs died is closer to twice that amount, with further damage to reproduction. Even if the previous idea was right, the crabs are taken in unlimited quantities that have continued to rise.

"They can take as many crabs as they like, and that harvest continues to grow, rising from around 130,000 in 1989 to 483,245 in 2017, according to the [Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission]'s latest stock assessment report," Popular Mechanics reported last year. And half the bled females did not reproduce.

Thank you.